

Date submitted (UTC-11): 8/19/2017 3:29:00 PM

First name: Justin

Last name: Howe

Organization: Cody Resources LP

Title: President

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 820 A Bar A Ranch Road

Address2:

City: Encampment

State: WY

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 82325

Country: United States

Email: justin.howe@abararanch.com

Phone: 307-327-5454

Comments:

In reviewing your Landscape and Vegetation Analysis project, we examined your maps and have a few comments. Specifically, we note that you have also mapped several areas that are under consideration for wilderness designation and that you have mapped several roads in some areas on your map.

We see the need for some remediation of the beetle kill areas and are supportive of the areas marked for mechanical or fire treatment with the following comments: 1) We note that the areas marked are generally straight edged. We would prefer to see mosaic patterns in the thinning to diversify habitats and to help with aesthetics. 2) Past fire remediation has caused severe cheat grass encroachment along road 512 where it meets the North Platte. We request that any fire be applied only when the ground is moist to avoid overheating the ground and opening the landscape for further infestation. 3) The forest service has a severe problem with thistle and, toad flax and leafy spurge in the Savage Run wilderness along Savage and Mullen Creeks. This is causing problems for us (downstream land owner), as we are constantly needing to spray the boundary with the forest to limit encroachment on our property.

Separately, we note that the Black Cat Forest, located to the North of Prospect Creek Road, is not marked for thinning. We agree with this approach, as it is adjacent to the BLM Prospect Creek wilderness study area, is a nearly roadless area, and provides critical winter habitat on the West side of the North Platte river. We recommend that the road marked in the Black Cat Forest be removed, as it is seldom-used.

In addition, we recommend that the Black Cat Forest be designated a wilderness study area. This move would help connect the Platte River Wilderness, proposed BLM Prospect Creek Wilderness Study Area, and Savage Run Wilderness. It would also provide a wilderness refuge for wildlife that winter on the West side of the North Platte river. Cody Resources LP, which I represent, holds the grazing lease on the Black Cat Forest as well as the Prospect Creek WSA. It's guest ranch, the A Bar A, also guides guests on horseback rides. It is our determination that a wilderness designation would have little impact, as all our current use of the area is done on horseback and on foot.